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VALLEY NOTEBOOK

Lack Of Young Scientists Cited By Dr. Thomas

By WILLIAM L. SANDERS
Daily News Staff Writer

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Dr. Charles Allen Thomas, former Daytonian who heads the Monsanto Chemical Co., by-passed tradition when he spoke on "Let's Make Science More Appealing to Youth" at the recent meeting of the American Chemical Society in Minneapolis.

Recipient of the Priestley medal awarded by the society, Dr. Thomas eschewed technical matters in favor of exploring the reasons why more young people are not choosing science as a career.

Monsanto's president noted four reasons for the current antipathy to science on the part of young people:

ONE—People have a misunderstanding and ignorance of what scientists actually do.

TWO—There is an alarming trend towards anti-intellectualism in this country.

THREE—We lack enough qualified secondary science teachers.

FOUR—There is a disturbing tendency among youth to pick the "easiest" subjects in high school.

Dr. Thomas offered chemists a number of proposals to stimulate the interest of young people. These apply to other scientists and scientific fields.

"Chemical engineers should acquaint teenagers with modern chemical plants," he said. "Chemical industry management should organize more programs to educate youth in the importance and necessity of specific careers."

"Science teachers should help recruit future chemists and chemical engineers. Television should be used to tell the public what a chemist or chemical engineer actually does."

"Science and industry should join hands in campaigning for salary raises for teachers of scientific subjects. All men of science should talk and listen to the young."

Apropos of Dr. Thomas' speech, the U.S. Central Intelligence agency estimates that the Soviet Union will graduate 1,200,000 scientists in the decade, 1950-1960. This compares with an estimated 900,000 in the United States.

Dean Points Up Lack

Dean N.W. Dougherty of the University of Tennessee highlighted the lack of young scientists at the November technical meeting of engineers in the Engineers club.

"When I asked a former commissioner of education why we could not get more mathematics and science in the schools, he said that principals and superintendents would not do it because the patrons would not let them," the dean recalled. "They wanted their children graduated and, unfortunately, it made little difference to them in what subjects."

Dean Dougherty mused, "It seems strange, indeed, that a rich and generous nation should undertake suicide by allowing something to slip from her schools which is the key to her prosperity."

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